



AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF CANADA;

WITH

THEIR REPLY

TO THE

WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION.



"The tyrant's chains are only strong  
While slaves submit to wear them,  
And who could bind them on the throng  
Determined not to wear them."—COLZ.

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## THE WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION TO THE CANADIAN PEOPLE.

FRIENDS IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM, BROTHERS  
UNDER OPPRESSION, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS LIVING  
IN HOPE,—

We have witnessed with delight the noble spirit you have evinced against the despotic ordinances and tyrant mandates of your oppressors. Inspired by the justice of your cause, you have nobly begun the glorious work of resistance; may the spirit of perseverance inspire you onward till the basely-concocted resolutions are withdrawn—your constitutional rights and wishes respected—or your independence secured by a charter won by your bravery!

While freemen stand erect in the conscious pride of thinking right and acting well, their honest front will oft-times scare the tyrant from his purpose, or check his mad career; for experience has taught him *that liberty in a smock-frock is more than a match for tyranny in armour*; but if they chance to crouch submission, or yield but a hair's-breadth to his wish, their doom is fixed—for tyrants delight to crush the yielding suppliant slave.

Onward, therefore, brothers, in your struggle—you have justice on your side, and good men's aspirations that you win. Nay, we trust that the wide-spreading information of the present age has so far enlightened the minds and expanded the sympathies of most classes of men, that even the British soldier (cut off and secluded as he is from society), on turning to the annals of atrocious deeds which mark the track of kingly despotism, and more especially those which characterise its career of cruelty against American liberty, when the savage yell, the tomahawk, and the scalping-knife were the frightful accompaniments of the bayonet, must blush for his country and his profession.

Yes, friends, the cause of DEMOCRACY has truth and reason on its side, and knavery and corruption are alone its enemies.

To justly distribute the blessings of plenty which the sons of industry have gathered, so as to bless without satiety all mankind—to expand by the blessings of education the divinely-mental powers of man, which tyrants seek to mar and stultify—to make straight the crooked paths of justice, and humanize the laws—to purify the world of all the crimes which want and lust of power have nurtured,—is the end and aim of the democrat; to act the reverse of this is the creed and spirit of aristocracy. Yet of this latter class are those who govern nations—men whose long career of vice too often forms a pathway to their power—who, when despotic deeds have stirred their subjects up to check their villany, declaim against

"sedition," talk of "designing men," and impiously invoke the attributes of the Deity to scare them from their sacred purpose.

It gives us great pleasure to learn, friends, that you are not so easily scared *by proclamation law*--by the decree of a junta against a whole nation. Surely you know and feel, though Governor Gosford may not, that "**A NATION NEVER CAN REBEL.**" For when the liberties of a million of people are prostrated to the dust at the will of a grasping, despicable minority--when an attempt is made to destroy their representative rights, the only existing bond of allegiance, the only power through which laws can be justly enforced--then has the time arrived when society is dissolved into its original elements, placing each man in a position freely to choose for himself those institutions which are the most consonant to his feelings, or which will best secure to him his life, labour, and possessions. If the mother country will not render *justice* to her colonies in return for their allegiance--if she will not be content with *mutual* obligations, but seek to make them the prey of military nabobs and hungry lordlings, executing their decrees with force, she must not be disappointed to find her offspring deserting her for her unnatural absurdities and monstrous cruelty.

Your legislative and executive councils, feeling the great inconvenience of submitting to your constitutional rights, have endeavoured to frown you into compliance by British legislation.

You have wisely questioned such authority, and justly branded their decrees with the infamy they deserve. They now loudly threaten you with Gosford-law of their own enactment. Should you be firm to your purpose (as we think you will), they will have recourse to diplomacy and cunning; they will amuse you with the name of royalty, talk of your youthful Queen's affection for you, and resort to every specious art their craft can dictate. But they will carefully keep back from royal ears the wrongs they have generated--the crimes of open plunder and private speculation which have made the breach between you; they'll tell their garbled tale of "treason and sedition," poisoning the youthful mind to suit their purpose.

Canadian brethren! hear us, though we be only working men:--trust not too much to princely promises when your own ears are the witness; less so, when oceans roll between, and interested chieftains tell the tale. Trust to your righteous cause, and honest deeds to make that cause secure.

We have received, with considerable satisfaction, your resolutions approving of our humble exertions in your behalf--though we did but our duty in endeavouring to arouse the feelings of our fellow-men against the injustice we saw was about to be perpetrated on a distant portion of our brethren; and in this we have been successful to a

degree we did not anticipate, for we have received letters of approval from considerable bodies of working men joining their feelings and sympathies with ours towards you. Do not, therefore, believe that the working millions of England have any feelings in common with your oppressors; if they have not unitedly condemned their infamy, it is that the severity of their own misfortunes and oppressions diverts their attention from those of their neighbours. When the voice of the millions shall be heard in the senate-house, when *they* shall possess power to decree justice, our colonies will cease to be regarded as nurseries for despots, where industry is robbed to pamper vice.

We beg to congratulate you on the number of choice spirits which the injustice inflicted on your country has called into action. With such leaders to keep alive the sacred flame of freedom, and such devotedness and self-denial as you have evinced from the onset, we augur to you success.

Hoping that you will continue to stir up the timid and cheer on the brave—to teach your children to lisp the song of freedom, and your maidens to spurn the hand of a slave—and that you may yet witness the sun of independence smiling on your rising cities, your cheerful homes, tangled forests, and frozen lakes, is the ardent wish of the members of the Working Men's Association.

(By Order) W. LOVETT, *Secretary*.

**THE PERMANENT AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNTY OF MONTREAL, TO THE WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF LONDON.**

BROTHERS:—

We have received the Address of the London WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION to the PEOPLE OF CANADA. It has been read amidst enthusiastic cheers, at a meeting of our PERMANENT AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE, and published in our newspapers. It has gone abroad over the AMERICAN Continent, as evidence that the bold democratic spirit which shook off the grasp of sordid barons, and fixed limits to the prerogatives of arbitrary sovereigns, still animates a portion of your citizens.

The glory of your nation has ever been the existence of its recognised democracy, which enabled you, throughout long and bitter struggles, to maintain a degree of liberty and political power superior to that possessed by your European neighbours. We accept, therefore, with grateful thanks, the sympathy of a democracy endowed with such exalted and correct sentiments on the nature of government.

Aristocracy is a stranger to us. With it we hold not, feel not, have not, any principles in common. Thanks to the facility with which our ancestors have been able to

obtain fertile land in a territory of unlimited extent, and to our laws which prevent the accumulation of hereditary wealth, nearly our whole population is dependant for subsistence on manual or mental labour. We respect men for their good works ; we despise them for their misdeeds, whatever may have been the deserts of their fathers. We honour him who causes two blades of corn to sprout where only one grew before ; who goes forth and makes the forest disappear from before his footsteps : we despise the idler who vegetates on the earth a mere consumer of what better men produce. The distinctive names of your various mechanical occupations appear to our eyes more honourable than the pompous titles, oppressive privileges, and unnatural hereditary legislation, which have been usurped and granted by sovereigns, and registered in heralds' offices, in the vain attempt to create two orders of intelligence where nature has made but one.

We live in a hemisphere chosen for the untrammelled action and free growth of democracy, unstinted by any proximity to an exhausting, deep-rooted aristocracy. The few exotics of that tribe transplanted from another world, wither and disappear from a soil which affords no nourishment to their order, and upon which EQUAL RIGHTS was stamped in everlasting characters when it first emerged from chaos.

The aboriginal master of the American wilderness knew neither lord nor king, but freely chose the best deserving as head in council, and chief in war. When the pilgrims from England, imbued with a dignified taste for freedom, first landed on the bleak shores of New England, they brought good seed to a land already prepared for its reception, and from which it was to spread and fructify ; and though Europe endeavoured to quarter her minions in various parts of this sanctuary, the corruptions which followed them disappeared before the flood of light proceeding from principles recognised, proclaimed, and acted upon by a body of virtuous and enlightened democrats, who braved and overcame the difficulties of their new settlement, not through any motives of wealth or thirst of plunder, but to establish on sounder principles the science and economy of government.

Long connected with you as fellow-subjects, with you we have shared the withering influence of an aristocracy which, pampered in the Eastern hemisphere, has, in our unfortunate case, been permitted to annoy the West. However confident we feel that such an unnatural and baneful principle cannot long keep enthralled this democratic continent, yet we fear for you that the hereditary reverence for particular families, the dangerous accumulation of enormous masses of wealth in the hands of a few, and the corrupting practices of a Government depraved in the distribution of its patronage, have so marred the benefits which should arise to you from the glorious

charter of your rights, that years must elapse before you can re-assume and completely enjoy the liberty which you should inherit from your forefathers. The accession of a young Queen afforded a favourable opportunity of renewing the conditions of the social compact, and of your contract of allegiance. Co-heirs with her to the institutions of your country, that country you have often defended with your blood. With the persevering industry of your constant daily toil have you raised it to a pinnacle of redundant wealth, and now in the midst of that dazzling splendour, which has been created by your indomitable energies, you are robbed by unequal and unjust laws; borne down by grinding taxation, which deprives you of the necessaries, in order to minister to the profusions of an overbearing caste occupied in entangling you in its meshes, there to limit your privileges, whilst you have been honestly and devotedly working to create and maintain its enormous wealth, which is at once its portion and the instrument of your political subjection. Whilst in some instances you were successfully acting in the dignity of conscious might, with sorrow have we too often seen some of your worthiest friends neglected at your recent elections, and a portion of the democracy indifferent spectators, willing auxiliaries, or the servile mercenaries of one or the other aristocratic factions which are contending for the privilege of loading you with their oppressive yoke, totally indifferent to your interests, except in so far as the relaxation of an abuse tends to the security of their own power.

In the free exercise of our acknowledged privileges—in defence of rights guaranteed and dear to us, we have met publicly in our various counties, as a preliminary proceeding, to protest solemnly against the infamous invasion of powers inherently appertaining to us. Conscious of our strength and right, we treated with contempt a silly proclamation of an ignorant governor against these meetings. We hope this lesson will not be lost. We trust that it will prevent for the future a presumptuous interference with the people's immunities both here and elsewhere. We are gratified that our conduct in promptly repelling the attack of the British Parliament upon our property has merited your approbation. Have you reflected on the mighty responsibility to the whole British empire which has devolved upon the people of this province? The British ministry could never have introduced a monstrous measure which aims at the destruction of the powers of a democracy, acting through their own branch of the legislature, merely for the purpose of hastening the payment of a few paltry official salaries, when that object could have been obtained by a simple and honest process, were it not that your aristocracy are preparing an unholy scheme for the destruction of your own liberties. Lower Canada is made the theatre of the experiment, not because



it deserves such harsh severity, but because it is imagined that the majority of the population, being of French extraction, though borne down by continued abuse or arbitrary exactions, would excite no sympathy among the English race by which they are surrounded.

The conviction of the mighty responsibility resting upon us, far from discouraging, invigorates us, conscious that all energetic and free minds throughout the empire must watch with intense anxiety our courageous struggle—that their wishes are for us, and that they pray that we may successively defend the rights of all. For ourselves, rest assured, we are determined never to submit to the intended ministerial usurpation—never to live with the world's finger of derision pointed at us as a people who, more ignoble than slaves that are bought and sold, permitted their birth-right to be wrested from them, thereby establishing a precedent for a similar aggression on the liberties of their brother colonists and fellow-men throughout the empire.

Think not that because few in number, we dread the result of this our determination. Nature has given strong fastnesses to our country; to our people strong hearts. Our arms now are the arguments of justice and of reason. They can be easily changed for more decided weapons, if the eyes of the invaders of our rights continue too dull to see, and their ears too obtuse to hear. We deem not that armed bands from Europe would now wage exterminating war upon the democracy of America. They are themselves the offspring of a democracy which in the nineteenth century is alike in feeling throughout the civilised world. They know they are not blind instruments to do the bidding of a brutal master, but moral agents responsible for their deeds to God and humanity. When the day of trial arrives, they will rather throw aside the ensigns of their cruel occupation, to be received into the kindred bosom of an American fraternity, than aid in murderous designs against the heart's blood of a generous people acting for the defence of the common RIGHTS OF MAN.

We do not assume a tone of defiance to your Government unless forced to it. Our grievances are not of new character or of recent date. They have been publicly and distinctly stated, and the mode and measure of redress have been plainly defined. Our citizens have at public meetings reiterated them for years past. They have founded upon them humble petitions to your Parliament, which turning a deaf ear, now adds aggression to contempt. Under such circumstances we may safely appeal to the judgment of the whole world for our justification in determining to be deluded no longer with vain hopes of redress from beyond the seas, but to depend alone upon our own energies, and that sympathy from our brethren upon this continent, which a cause so just must inevitably command.



We have not alluded to a separate independence from the British Crown, but we are not forgetful that the destiny of continental colonies severs them from the Metropolitan State, whenever the unconstitutional action of a legislative power residing in a distant country is no longer supportable. There is nothing in this prospect to separate the identity of interest which should exist between the democracy of the old world and that of the new. If colonies are to be made an instrument of corrupt patronage for providing refuge and maintenance for the poorer portion of your aristocracy; an excuse for maintaining standing armies; for robbing the people of their substance to pile up stone and mortar into fortifications, or a pretence for restricting the free operations of your trade, the casting off such as can support themselves can only give stability to your own liberties and advance your national prosperity. You have the example of the United States, which in one year, as an independent offspring, does more for the honour and benefit of the parent state, than she could have accomplished in ages of weak, puling, dependant existence.

We again thank you for the sympathy which you express for the people of Canada. It is pleasant to receive such sympathy from Englishmen. You have done a noble act, for since a people is responsible for the deeds of its rulers, yours is a manly and virtuous determination, to inform mankind that you hold yourselves guiltless of the enormity attempted to be committed by those over whose actions you, unfortunately for yourselves and for us, have no control. Whatever may be the result of this your noble patriotism and generous self-devotion, we are assured that you will leave your children better fortified against your domineering obligarchs, than you were yourselves at your entrance into life.

We desire, through your Association, to proclaim, that whatever course we shall be compelled to adopt, we have no contest with the PEOPLE of England. We war only against the aggressions of their and our tyrannical oppressors.

Signed by order, and on behalf, of the Permanent and Central Committee.

Raymond Plessis, *President*; L. J. Papineau; C. H. O. Cote; Joseph Le Tourneau; Pierre Cadieux; Chamilly De Lorimier; Anderé Ouimet; J. Phelan; C. Ovide Perrault; E. B. O'Callaghan; Robert Nelson; J. Boulanger; Louis Perrault; W. Galt; E. R. Fabre; T. S. Brown; E. N. Duchesnois; Joshua Bell; Chevalier De Lorimier, Geo. E. Cartier, *Secretaries*.

*All Letters must be post-paid, and addressed to the Secretary, 6, Upper North Place, Gray's Inn Lane.*

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